

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS BOARD

Saturday, October 23, 2010

Killen's Pond State Park Nature Center
Felton, Delaware

MINUTES

Members Present: Michael Casson, Stephanie DeWitt, Marilyn Dollard, Karen Gordon, Chris Kenton, David Kohan, Jill Lewandowski, Wendy Murray, Whitney Price and Kathleen Thomas, Chair.

Members Absent: Joanne Christian, Samtra Devard, Cristy Greaves, Lori Hudson, Shelley Rouser and Jacqueline Wisnauskas.

Others Present: Charlie Michels, PSB Executive Director, Pearl Carrington, Secretary, Paula Fontello, Deputy Attorney General, Judi Coffield, State Board of Education and Jacquelyn K. Wilson, Assistant Professor, School of Education University of Delaware, DASL.

Retreat Call to Order and Approval of Agenda:

Ms. Thomas, Professional Standards Board Chair called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. Ms. Gordon moved and Mr. Kohan seconded a motion to approve the Agenda. The motion carried.

Emergency Certificate Discussion

Mr. Michels listed two essential questions on a poster mounted at the front of the room:

“Should Emergency Certificates be limited?”

“If so, for which Standard Certificates?”

Mr. Michels began with a brief historical perspective of the PSB's role in reviewing Emergency Certificates which included the initial established myth that there were not many Emergency Certificates on record until the data emerged. At that point, the PSB in collaboration with the SBE, amended regulation 1506 in the hopes that the numbers of individuals working with students every day who were not fully certified, would diminish. During late spring of 2009, school chiefs and district and charter school personnel directors were advised of changes in regulation/law and that the changes would be implemented by the Department. At the time of the initial conversations and subsequent approved amendments, both Boards promised to return to this area of certification in the future. The future is now.

It was noted that only a school district or charter school may make application for an Emergency Certificate for one of their employees.

Mr. Michels reviewed in detail with the PSB Members the lengthy Report he generated from a DEEDS Emergency Certificate Matrix dated 10/11/2010. This iteration of the Report included data from two previous DEEDS Matrixes: 3/4/2009 and 2/17/2010.

Mr. Michels stressed that the data in DEEDS is always in flux and that more than likely there had been additional Emergency Certificates applied for in DEEDS since the inception of the Report, as the Fall is generally the time of year that Emergency Certificates are applied for.

It was made clear to the Board that trying to integrate DEEDS, eschool and PHRST is problematic and had not been designed to do such. Just two days previous, the DEEDS contractor at DOE had made some connections between individual's Emergency Certificates and their posted school schedules. Although it cannot be said that this is 100% accurate, it will give Mr. Michels some insight when he has the opportunity to drill into the data.

~ A Discussion followed with comments, statements and questions posed:

The Department has reviewed the standing regulation and is currently issuing all Emergency Certificates with the issuance date of the first of the month of the month of hire, and an expiration date of June 30. It was noted that districts/charter schools must affirm that the educator has, within the school year, received a satisfactory summative DPAS II evaluation and has made progress within their 'plan' in DEEDS in achieving the Standard Certificate for which the Emergency Certificate was issued. Expiration dates of June 30 will negate the possibility of an exigent circumstance due to the expiration during the school year. It has been suggested by several sources and given a relative nod of approval by school chiefs over a year ago to issue Emergency Certificates for one year at a time with the responsibility of affirming the continued need falling on the districts or charter schools.

A long-term substitute can teach in one area for 91 days, have a minimum of 2 positive evaluations, and with the assent of the district or charter school, use that time in lieu of the Initial Licensure requirement. Upon licensure, the educator must then apply for a Standard Certificate. It is at this point that a district or charter school may apply for an Emergency Certificate for that individual. It was noted that at this point, the Department may have to wait numerous months for the associated transcripts, etc. in order to issue the License and the associated Certificate. The question was raised as to whether or not the PSB and SBE have the authority to require the district or charter school drop the educator to sub pay if the requisite documents are not in the hands of the Department within a given amount of time. Ms. Fontello reviewed the PSB's statutory authority and advised that the PSB's authority is limited to supplements and does not permit the PSB to regulate educators' base salaries.

It was asked how many Emergency Certificates only need Praxis II for the issuance of the Standard Certificate. Mr. Michels noted that the vast majority of the 57% of current educators for whom the Emergency Certificate was a second or subsequent certificate, the passing of the

appropriate Praxis II test was the solitary requirement.

‘Critical Curricular Area’ designations begin with the US DOE, then Delaware has the ability to add or delete areas on the list. Although the University of Delaware’s ARTC Program works with applicants in these areas, only 16% of the 68% of all critical curricular area Emergency Certificates are for educators in the Program.

Although Reading is considered a critical curricular area, Mr. Michels felt that a reading teacher is different from a Reading Specialist, for whom there are currently 19 Emergency Certificates: a reduction from previous Reports.

Dr. Coffield mentioned that last year the SBE sponsored/conducted drop-out forums that allowed students to talk about their experiences. The students spoke about teachers who were assigned to teach in areas whether or not they were knowledgeable or prepared to teach the subject. The students noted that both the students and teacher were more successful when the teacher had the requisite content knowledge.

Ms. Fontello reviewed several options and inquired about the policy that was implemented to allow for an Emergency Certificate’s 3 year issuance. She advised that if the PSB is going to consider limiting Emergency Certificated areas, the Board must be able to justify choices. It was discussed that it may be a better idea to limit the duration of the certificates. The option of limiting Emergency Certificates to a single year was considered, although this could present a hardship for those Standard Certificates that have a ‘course count’. Two other areas need to be considered: Skilled and Technical Sciences (STS) educators and the ARTC program participants. Currently STS and ARTC program participants have 6 and 2 years, respectively.

Using the expiration date of June 30 would negate the need to have the certificate extended to the end of the school year as an exigent circumstance. It would not however, preclude other exigent circumstances which are those beyond the control of the educator.

Dr. Coffield suggested that Mr. Michels have an Emergency Certificate conversation with Dr. Gray, the State Board President, in the near future, as the State Board must be a collaborative partner in any changes advocated by the PSB.

The meeting was recessed for lunch at 12:15 p.m.

LUNCH: 12:15 – 1:10

The Retreat was called back to order at 1:12 p.m. by Ms. Thomas.

Mr. Michels listed an essential question on a poster mounted at the front of the room:

“Should the Administrative Certificate criteria be for Just Qualified Candidates?”

Mr. Michels introduce Dr. Wilson, an acknowledged Delaware ‘expert’ in the area of School Leadership.

Dr. Wilson gave a brief overview of the history of School Leadership in Delaware, including the evolution of certification requirements and the current research as provided by national researchers, including Dr. Brad Portin of the University of Washington.

School Principal and Assistant Principal

Mr. Michels initiated the conversation by speaking to the current overall Delaware certification policy (*that has been in place for quite a while and through several DOE administrations*) in which the successful completion of requirements would establish *Just Qualified Candidates*. Mr. Michels asked the Board to consider what that meant for School Leaders relative to education and both types and amounts of experiences.

Mr. Michels suggested that the Board consider amending the current ‘course count’ to be more reflective of current best practice, by way of establishing a rigorous course of study, approved by PSB. Each of the three DE universities that offer a graduate program for school leaders, (University of Delaware, Delaware State University and Wilmington University) would be required to use the approved Program’s syllabus and the expectations of students would be purposefully identical. The Universities, in previous conversations with Mr. Michels, agreed that a student must complete the Program in its entirety at one University, as opposed previously to an educator taking singular ‘course count’ courses from a variety of Universities. It was noted that the Program (*Delaware School Leader Preparation Program* ?) as approved by the PSB and SBE, could have as criteria a minimum number of clinical hours required and or other experiences as seen as necessary for a minimally prepared school leader. Mr. Michels noted that a number of States have similar School Principal and Assistant Principal certification requirements including individual State ‘home grown’ Programs of Study. The Board appeared to condone this path.

Ms. Fontello noted that as a Graduate level Education Program, it may need to be approved by the Department, as the Department is responsible for educator preparation program approvals.

Mr. Michels spoke to the ETS School Leader Licensure Assessment (*SLLA*) test which 19 States require in addition to education and experience. It was noted that the addition of this, if deemed appropriate, would need to be crafted carefully within the regulation to preclude the ability of a Delaware educator solely taking the test and earning the Standard Certificate, as is done with other Praxis II tests for additional Standard Certificates.

The Board had no issues with the current additional path to certification being a Masters degree in School Leadership.

Dr. Wilson noted that notwithstanding the Board’s concerns about best preparing educators for this critical role, the hiring is still the prerogative of the districts and charter schools.

Mr. Michels broached the subject of types of and required years of teaching experience. According to the feedback Mr. Michels received from Members on the administrative certifications ‘homework’, the vast majority of Members felt that the experience requirement for Principals and Assistant Principals should be increased to 5 years. Within the subsequent

conversation, Ms. Thomas indicated that the educator should have received a minimum of 4 ‘satisfactory’ (*to be defined*) DPAS summative evaluations. Mr. Michels indicated that to his knowledge, no other State had a 5 year experience requirement for School Principal and Assistant Principal.

Currently, the Delaware regulation states that the teaching experience must be in the area initially assigned as a Principal or Assistant Principal, e.g. elementary teaching experience to be assigned an elementary school, and high school teaching experience to be assigned a high school, with middle level teaching experience being used for either an initial elementary or high school initial assignment. As the discussion progressed it was suggested that the same be true for an initial middle level assignment and the requisite middle level teaching experience. The Members agreed that teaching at the middle level does indeed provide different experiences and that the School Leader skills at middle level are unique unto themselves.

Ms. Thomas noted the absence at the Retreat of PSB administrator representatives who would want to provide input in the future. Mr. Michels reiterated that the Retreat was for discussion only and that all PSB Members will have the opportunity for input in the future.

A discussion began around the second administrative certification, *School Leader I*. Mr. Michels began by saying the title should read *Certified Central Office Personnel*, which is more reflective of the roles these educators have. A similar edit for the current *School Leader II* amended to *Superintendent* which would be inclusive of Assistant Superintendent.

Members spoke initially of types and durations of experiences. Members agreed that a Principal or Assistant Principal experience should not be required, but that a minimum of 5 years of teaching experience was reasonable. It was noted that in some cases these educators may have the responsibility of evaluating School Principals and Assistant Principals, but that the requisite DPAS training and certification would support accurate evaluations.

It was pointed out during the discussion that appropriate notice would need to be given to Delaware educators of proposed administrative certification changes and that those educators in the midst of accumulating the necessary education courses be given time to complete them.

With the consent of Board Members, the meeting adjourned at 3 PM.